



# Los Angeles County Commission on Disabilities

*Celebrating 35 Years of Leadership & Advocacy*

[www.laccod.org](http://www.laccod.org)



## MEMBERS

John B. Troost  
**President**

Janet A. Neal  
**1<sup>st</sup> Vice President**

John R. James  
**2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President**

Kecia B. Weller  
**Treasurer**

Wan Chun Chang  
Edward A. Colley  
Michael G. Gureckas  
Steven Miller  
Maria Mustelie-Parrish  
Winslow Reitnouer  
Alexia Teran  
Wendy L. Welt  
Sheila D. Wright

February 6, 2012

TO: Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky, Chairman  
Supervisor Gloria Molina  
Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas  
Supervisor Don Knabe  
Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich

FROM: John B. Troost  
President, Commission on Disabilities

SUBJECT: ACCESS SERVICES, INC.

The Los Angeles County Commission on Disabilities (LACCOD) was established by the Board of Supervisors in 1975 to advise the Board on disability issues. One of the duties of the Commission, with the assistance of County departments and others, is to advise your Board on the unique needs of people with disabilities, including, but not limited to, the areas of health, employment, education, public attitudes, barriers and recreation.

An additional area LACCOD would like to advise your Board on is transportation. LACCOD is particularly concerned about the quality of service and safety of service that Access Services, Inc. (ASI), the Consolidated Transportation Services Agency for Los Angeles County, provides to their customers. ASI is also responsible for the administration of the Los Angeles County Coordinated Paratransit Plan, on behalf of the County's 45 public fixed route operators and provides more than 2.3 million rides each year. The following are concerns the Commission would like you to be aware of and request your assistance in addressing:

### **Transit Access Pass (TAP) Card Program**

ASI is a partner in TAP, Los Angeles County's fare payment system, and has partnered with ReadyCARD to add the functionality of a prepaid VISA Card provided to riders. In August 2011, ASI started to transition to the new card, which has caused some confusion for riders, and the LACCOD has identified several concerns:

1. The potential for identity theft by family members or caregivers.
2. The risk of being targeted by the criminal element due to the VISA Logo and the possibility of receiving injuries during an attempted robbery or snatching event.

3. The small print on the back of the card is especially difficult for the partially sighted/low vision person to read.
4. Confusion caused with the option to activate or not activate the VISA component of card.
5. The difficulty with understanding regular monthly fees/charges.
6. The TAP Card system possibly being adopted by the Los Angeles County Metro transportation system as well, which would result in the same concerns.

### **Community Advisory Committee**

ASI is currently in the process of restructuring their Community Advisory Committee (CAC). The CAC was established in 1995 as an advisory body intended to represent the voice of the disabled community. LACCOD would like to understand why the restructuring is necessary. In addition, LACCOD would like to ensure that the disabled community is represented equally, on both the Board of Directors and the Community Advisory Committee, and is able to voice concerns and opinions without fear of retaliation.

### **Vehicle Purchases**

LACCOD is particularly concerned about the size of vehicles being purchased by ASI. Several Commissioners have witnessed small hybrid vehicles being used to transport disabled riders. LACCOD fully supports green initiatives and understands the importance of purchasing "green" vehicles. However, the use of smaller "green" vehicles should not interfere with a rider's comfort and safety and should also have adequate trunk compartment space for walkers, canes, crutches, wheelchairs and other equipment.

In closing, the Los Angeles County Commission on Disabilities would like to thank you for taking the time to consider the concerns of the Commission. As our next meeting of the Commission will be held on March 21, 2012, we would hope that your office can provide us with any information on the issues raised above prior to that date. Thank you again for your attention to this matter.

JBT:rr

c: Avianna Uribe  
Kathleen Austria  
Cynthia Scott  
Richard Espinosa  
Helen Berberian  
Dolores Nasen, ASI Board Member Appointee